

**Wellesley Public Schools
School Committee Meeting
March 20, 2018
Wakelin Room, Wellesley Free Library**

The Open Session meeting of the School Committee convened at 6:47 pm. Those present included Committee Chair Michael D'Ortenzio Jr., Vice Chair Matt Kelley, Secretary Melissa Martin, and members Linda Chow and Sharon Gray; Superintendent David Lussier, Assistant Superintendents Judy Belliveau and Joan Dabrowski; and Student Advisory representative Arya Amuzgar. Mr. D'Ortenzio Jr. informed the group that the meeting is being recorded by local media.

Ms. Linda Chow was welcomed as the newest member of the School Committee and Ms. Gray was congratulated on her re-election to the Committee.

CITIZEN SPEAK – No one present wished to speak

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Lussier welcomed WHS students Peter Hodge (Gr 12), Sophia Staehly (Gr 12), Clementine Stark (Gr 11) and Veronica Smith (Gr 10) who came to discuss their involvement in organizing the **student walkout** in support of legislation to address gun violence in schools, which was held on March 15th. The students discussed the reasons for the walkout, the planning involved and next steps. They thanked everyone who supported this completely student run walkout, including the Administration for permitting it to occur.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Kelley reported he recently attended the second meeting of the **WHS NEASC Committee**, continuing the accreditation work. He is still amazed at the thoughtfulness of the teachers on the committee. The next meeting is scheduled for May 4th.

Ms. Gray indicated she is part of the **PAWS Feasibility Study Working Group**, with the bulk of work around educational programming needs for PAWS for the future. The group, along with the architect is focusing on programming in order to develop the appropriate square footage required for future use. The feasibility study will continue through May.

Ms. Martin thanked the **PAWS** community for the opportunity to read to students, which was a highlight of the year!

Ms. Chow thanked the Committee for the warm welcome and reported that as one of her first official duties, she had the pleasure of attending the District's Kindergarten Roundup registration and welcomed new parents to the District. She looks forward to serving on the Committee.

Mr. D'Ortenzio and Ms. Martin attended the **Wellesley Action Alliance** meeting in which there was much dynamic discussion and a number of questions concerning local school security measures.

STUDENT ADVISORY

Mr. Amuzgar reported the high school held a very successful **Seminar Day** in early March. Student Congress is now focusing on reviewing and potentially revising sections of the **Student Handbook**, specifically on the homework and snow days policy.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Approval of Minutes: January 30 and February 27, 2018 Open Session

Upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

ACTION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS**

Dr. Lussier introduced Ms. Cindy Mahr as his recommendation for the position of Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations. Ms. Mahr has served as the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations for the Weston School District for the past twelve years. She has over twenty-five years of financial management experience, including serving as the Director of Administrative Services for Brookline Public Schools, the Director of Administration and Finance for the Department of Public Health, and the Budget Director for the Department of Youth Services.

HR Director Gayle McCracken reviewed the interview process that preceded the recommendation of Ms. Mahr and thanked all involved.

Ms. Mahr then addressed the Committee discussing her background and expressed her excitement to join the Wellesley Public Schools in the capacity of Assistant Superintendent.

Committee members thanked Dr. Lussier, Ms. McCracken and the Screening Committee for their important work on this search, and indicated they are pleased with the recommendation of Ms. Mahr as the candidate for this position.

Upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to approve the Superintendent's recommendation for the appointment of Ms. Cynthia Mahr as the Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations and set her salary at \$160,000.

SCHOOL SECURITY UPDATE

The Committee was joined by Wellesley Police Chief Jack Pilecki, Deputy Chief Scott Whittemore, Sargent Brian Spencer, and Schofield Principal Gerardo Martinez. Dr. Lussier presented an update of the District's security efforts including the approach, history, current efforts and upcoming work.

Dr. Lussier discussed the District's close collaboration with the Wellesley Police and Fire Departments including the development of a Memorandum of Understanding

between WPS and the WPD, security planning, medical emergency planning and Town Table Top exercises led by the Fire Department. He reviewed building infrastructure work that has been ongoing including development of a common security template at the high school, Fiske and Schofield elementary schools, and the approval of a security package at the 2017 Annual Town Meeting to implement the template at all schools. The security template includes access control (AI Phones, Prox cards, improvements to doors and hardware); communications (PA Systems, All calls, police radios), and installation of video cameras. Dr. Lussier is pleased to report the security package work is nearing completion.

Dr. Lussier reminded the community that day-to-day emergency events primarily involve medical and behavioral issues. The District's Nursing Department staff work diligently to keep updated on protocols to address these day-to-day events.

Planning, protocols and training work was reviewed including school audits of the security work, updated school crisis plans, updated bomb threat protocol and training on new building security features. In addition, emergency medical procedures, ALICE-informed training and ongoing District and school-based training of staff and students was discussed. Deputy Chief Whittemore discussed the background and work around ALICE training in the District.

Mr. Martinez then discussed his experience in emergency protocols at the Schofield School that primarily include traffic control, medical and behavioral emergencies, as well as security. He reviewed the timeline of training protocols that has occurred over the years, leading up to student emergency training this school year. He thanked the Police Department for its excellent collaboration in this important work. Deputy Chief Whittemore and Sargent Spencer both discussed the success of the student emergency training that occurred. Mr. Martinez then discussed tweaks that will be made based on their experience with this first training session, including better communication with parents about the plan to hold the student training in order to provide parents time to socialize this with their children prior to training.

Dr. Lussier discussed the types of training at the various grade levels, noting that training at the middle and high schools will be different than the training that will occur at the elementary level.

Social and emotional supports in the District were reviewed including the School Wellness Advisory Committee (SWAC), Open Circle at the elementary level, Social and Emotional Education Development (SEED) at WMS, and Challenge Success as well as the Wheel of Social and Emotional Supports available to high school students. He explained all of this work involves building relationships with kids, giving them the information on knowing who to go to if they are having issues, and peer relationships.

Dr. Lussier indicated that the facilities security package is close to being completed. There will be continued training of staff and students, with a goal of completing a full round of training at each school this year, with subsequent scheduled annual training; ongoing communications at the school level with parents; and consideration of the possible addition of a School Resource Officer (SRO). He acknowledged the work of

SRO Evan Rosenberg for his presence in schools and excellent relationship with students, as well as the important work of the WPS social worker and two HRS social workers who assist the District, noting there is still a need for additional capacity for social workers in the schools.

Committee members thanked Dr. Lussier, Mr. Martinez and the Police Department representatives for their work on this important project. Questions were raised concerning appropriate training, whether there were training measures that were deemed not appropriate for the District and the timeline for training students. Members acknowledged the importance of students having peer and adult supports in school, including the role of the school psychologists and social workers who work with students, and expressed their support of an additional School Resource Officer.

HHU UPDATES – Discussion deferred

SUPPORT OF REVISIONS TO ANIMAL CONTROL BYLAW

The Board of Selectmen has requested the Committee's support of the replacement of the existing language of Town Bylaw Article 47, "Animal Control Regulations," in its entirety. The bylaw was last modified at the 1995 Annual Town Meeting and does not include the provisions of the state laws enacted in 2012 governing animal control. The revised Article 47 will bring the Town's bylaws into compliance with current state law.

After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Martin and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to support the proposed to the Animal Control Bylaw as presented.

SC ASSIGNMENT – POLICY SUBCOMMITTEE

With the departure of Dr. Bent from the Committee, there is a need to appoint a member to the Policies Subcommittee to continue progress on this work. After a brief discussion, upon a motion made by Ms. Gray and seconded by Mr. Kelley, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to appoint Michael D'Ortenzio, Jr., to the Policies Subcommittee.

CITIZENS SPEAK

The following individuals addressed the Committee during Citizens Speak:

Adam Meyers, Brenda Nicolazzo, and Sam Gauldie, Hardy School parents; Amy Hernandez, Julie Sarly and Sharon Clarke-Levin, Schofield parents; Amy Gottschalk, Upham School parent; and Leslie Weiser, parent of a WMS student.

Each individual spoke on behalf of the security work in schools, expressing support of the work on school infrastructure and staff training to date, but emphasized the need for better communication about what is being done in schools relative to security

improvements and training. They recommended the creation of a school safety committee, and parental training on how to prepare their children for the drills and also how to recognize warning signs of children with social emotional issues. Community involvement in security work and the support of an additional School Resource Officer was emphasized.

There was concern with field trips waiver forms and wondered if there is anything that can be done to better educate chaperones on their responsibilities when on field trips.

ADJOURNMENT

At approximately 9:05 pm, upon a motion made by Mr. Kelley and seconded by Ms. Gray, the Committee ***unanimously VOTED*** to adjourn.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Martin
Secretary

Documents and Exhibits Used:

WPS Security Update Presentation – 3/13/18

Schofield School Emergency Drill Presentation – 3/20/18